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Ophthalmic Literature

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CONTENTS

The Ophthalmic Year Book..... 97
Letter From Professor Hirschberg..... 99
Index of Ophthalmology:
Diagnosis 99
Operations, Refraction, Ocular Movements..... 100
Conjunctiva 101
Cornea and Sclera, Anterior Chamber and Pupil..... 102
Uveal Tract, Sympathetic Disease, Glaucoma..... 103
Crystalline Lens 104
Vitreous, Retina 105
Toxic Amblyopias, Optic Nerve, Tracts and Centers, Color Vision 106
Eyeball, Lacrimal Apparatus, Lids..... 107
Orbit, Parasites, Tumors..... 108
Injuries, Pathology, General Diseases..... 109
Comparative Ophthalmology, Hygiene, Ophthalmic Sociology and History 110
Abstracts From Foreign Journals:
Neuroparalytic Keratitis Following Alcohol Injection..... 110
Epithelial Growth Removed by Mesothorium..... 111
Influence of Anesthetics on Subconjunctival Injections..... 111

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Ophthalmic Literature

VOL. IV. JULY, 1914. NO. 7.

Edited by EDWARD JACKSON. Assisted by WILLIAM H. CRISP.

THE OPHTHALMIC YEAR BOOK.

The ambitious purpose of the Ophthalmic Year Book is to render most easily accessible to English-reading ophthalmologists all that is important with relation to ophthalmology in the year's literature of the world. This is to be accomplished by bringing together what is of importance and separating from it all that is not. In so far as important matter is not brought into the volume it fails of its purpose. In so far as unimportant matter is introduced it fails equally; since all unnecessary matter renders less accessible the thing for which the book is really valuable. Unnecessary matter must include repetition of what has previously been brought to the attention of the profession, and particularly what has been noticed in previous volumes of the Year Book.

Repetition must be avoided. That this is essential becomes more evident with the appearance of each new volume. The successive annual digests of the literature now aggregate 2,936 pages, while the lists of titles given in the bibliography occupy 611 pages. In searching the literature for particular topics the importance of keeping it down to the lowest possible limit becomes clearly apparent.

Then the matter included within the Year Book must be arranged with the greatest care and according to some simple rigid system. It should be possible to ascertain what of value has been written on a given topic, or that nothing has been written on it, in the period without giving time to reading pages that do not refer to it. Unless the matter sought has all been grouped together this will not be possible.

Such grouping requires, first, that the original article be carefully analyzed, picked to pieces, the essential thought separated from all others, and then that this thought be grouped in closest possible association with all other thoughts on that topic that are to be included in the volume.

In this the Year Book must radically differ from a collection of abstracts of particular papers. The abstract of a paper only does it justice when the leading or valuable thought of its author is given with somewhat the same connection of thought as he has chosen for its presentation. The paper may be greatly condensed, but still this connection of thought, this particular association of ideas should be preserved. But in the Year Book the association should not be that of the individual author. It should be the essential thoughts of others on the same topic.

This analysis of the original literature preparatory to the new synthesis that is to make it most accessible in the Year Book will often separate ideas that have been expressed, or facts that have been

recorded in the same article, causing them to appear in different paragraphs, or in different sections of the Year Book, and giving multiple references to that paper. But this is inevitable, in the process of getting all the ideas on one topic grouped under a system that will make it possible to most quickly and easily refer to them.

The grouping of information according to a definite system is necessary, as order is necessary, and a definite place to keep each thing, that one needs to find quickly for use at different times. It brings order into an accumulation of information, and without it the accumulation is worth very little. To make the system practical and useful it must be uniform throughout the book, so far as uniformity is possible. If, under conjunctiva, anatomy and physiology are taken up first, the same arrangement should be followed in the sections on the cornea, the retina or the lids. If in one volume a certain order has been adopted for the various sections, the same order should be followed in the next volume and altered only for the most weighty reasons, when the new order should be permanent.

This matter of the order of arrangement is an extremely important one. If properly worked out and rigidly adhered to, the convenience and usefulness of the book will grow with each new volume as the reader becomes more and more accustomed to it. Here individuality must be suppressed, uniformity must be aimed at, if the work put upon the Year Book is to be most serviceable to the profession. In the choice of the matter to be presented the personal knowledge, taste and judgment of the editors will always play the controlling part.

In a book, the purpose of which is to bring together and render accessible the important points of a vast literature, every unnecessary word should be eliminated. To cut down verbiage to the point where the meaning becomes obscure, or to make the transition from one thought to another so abrupt that the reader is puzzled, and has to pause to consider, or read over the sentence to get its meaning, is not to make the thought easier of access. But short of this the fewer words used the better. The omission of unnecessary words, and the exclusion of suggestions or statements that do not bear directly on the main thought adds to clearness. Where to strike the balance must be fixed by literary taste and judgment. These should be developed and cultivated to the highest degree practicable by writers of this sort of literature.

A careful reading of the latest volumes of the Year Book will show many points in which the ideal above set forth has not been attained. The limitations that hamper the preparation of such a book are many and hard to overcome. All of us are learning to write, all of us learning to arrange our thoughts in more definite order. All of us are learning to so choose words as to achieve the most clear, direct, brief form of expression. Something must be allowed for the reasonable demand that the book be gotten out as soon as practicable after the expiration of the year it covers. Some defects can be traced to the fact that all the editors have to snatch the time devoted to it from

that required for equally important occupations. But if the purpose of the Year Book, and the ideals regarding its achievement are steadily kept in mind, each volume will show progressive improvement.

LETTER FROM PROFESSOR HIRSCHBERG.

To the Editor of Ophthalmic Literature:

Going through the volumes of the American Encyclopedia of Ophthalmology, I was struck by the articles As-Sadili and As-Samarquandi. They are taken from my history without hint. Of course, as a careful reader, I found under Ammar, a foot-note giving a general acknowledgement of my work. But nobody (except the corrector) is expected or bound to read an encyclopedia from the first to the last page, and to remember on page 644 a foot-note from page 316. It were just as easy to add such word as "After Hirschberg" or "from H." That would not increase the bulk of the volume.

Working in literature forty-seven years I am not mean or too minute, and would not extend the matter, but finish with a few friendly hints for the excellent author of the historical articles of the encyclopedia: (1) Of Marcus Eliezer Block I detected after I gave his biography a wonderful picture in our National Gallery, and published a copy in the Deutsche med. Wochenschrift, 1913, No. 19, which may be useful for the supplement of the Encyclopedia. (2) Under Basedow (II, p. 901) the author asks, "What is priority?" I may answer the time of publication, referring to the word of the famous Bonnet of Lyons: l'histoire ne tient compte que des faits publies. (A similar word from a British author is to be found in my English Oculists (1800-1850), which is now under press. J. HIRSCHBERG, M.D.

Professor Hirschberg's suggestion of acknowledgement for abstracts taken bodily from his history seems entirely reasonable and practicable, and we think it should be carried out. The case against the editors of the Encyclopedia, however, is not so bad as might appear. On page 224 of Volume I, the writer of the historical articles says: "I have followed very closely the exposition of Hirschberg, as needs must be in a case like this. Until the monumental labors of this distinguished writer had been completed the memorandum book of Ali ben Isa (as well as numerous other important writings from the Arabic middle ages) were practically inaccessible to writers and workers of the west."

A more satisfactory acknowledgement of Professor Hirschberg's work was also prepared for the first volume of the Encyclopedia, but reserved for insertion later. We suspect the method suggested by Professor Hirschberg was not adopted in the first place because the editor desired to make the work as far as possible an American Encyclopedia. We happen to know that he declined proffered assistance from one or more famous European ophthalmologists, simply because he wished the work to be American. In this matter of Arabic history, however, we have to go to Professor Hirschberg, and the fact might as well be frankly stated.

Index of Ophthalmology

DIAGNOSIS.

Duane, A. Tangent Plane for Fields. Arch. of Ophth., v. 43, p. 420.

Henker. Gullstrand's Ophthalmoscope. Klin. M. f. Augenh., v. 53, p. 867.

Polak. Modification of Gullstrand's Ophthalmoscope. Soc. d'Opht. de Paris, June. Clin. Opht., v. 20, p. 462.

Vierling, F. Testing Visual Acuteness and Color Sense with Nagel's Tables. Zeit. f. Bahn-u. Bahnkassenärzte, v. 9, pp. 29, 58.

Wolff, H. Skiascopy with Gullstrand's Nernst Slit Lamp. Zeit. f. Augenh., v. 32, p. 1.

THERAPEUTICS.

Bonnefoy. Iodin Vapor in Ocular Therapeutics. Soc. Fr. d'Opht., v. 31. Ann. d'Ocul., v. 151, p. 470.

Laserew. Local Use of Guaiacol in Tuberculous Disease of Eyes. Klin. M. f. Augenh., June, p. 894.

Sattler, C. H. Action of Anesthetics in Subconjunctival Injections. (Bibl.) Graefe's Arch. f. Ophth., v. 88, p. 259.

Acoin in Subconjunctival Injection. (Bibl.) Ibid., p. 277.

Schreiber, L. Dutoit's Paper on Pellidol in Ophthalmology. Ibid., p. 413.

Repeated Titles. **Cuperus** (4, p. 84 Ophth. Lit., v. 4, p. 94. **Dutoit** (4, p. 37) Ophthalmoscope, v. 12, p. 445.

OPERATIONS.

Ulbrich, H. Kraupa's Bacterial Prophylaxis of Operative Infections. Klin. M. f. Augenh., v. 52, p. 863.

REFRACTION.

Alvarado. Ocular Complications of Diabetes. (Bibl.) Arch. de Oft., v. 14, p. 301.

Barrett, J. W. Diplopia-polyopia with Astigmatism. (3 ill.) Ophthalmoscope, v. 12, p. 396.

Bordeaux. Treatment of Extreme Myopia. Soc. Fr. d'Opht., v 31. Ann. d'Ocul., v. 151, p. 470.

Gallup, E. Results From Dynamic Skiametry. Op. J. and Rev. Optom., v. 33, p. 755.

Lockwood, R. M. Transposition of Double Cylinders at Oblique Axis. Op. J. and Rev. of Optom., v. 33, p. 742.

Pascal, J. I. Problems in Theoretic Optics. Ibid., p. 752.

Pascheff, C. Transient Myopia in Orbital Cellulitis. Ann. d'Ocul., v. 151, p. 426.

Percival, A. S. Periscopic Lenses. (1 ill.) Ophthalmoscope, v. 12, p. 390.

Polak and Duclos. Hypertrophy of Bridge of Nose and Ears by Wearing Glasses. Soc. d'Opht. de Paris, June. Clin. Opht., v. 20, p. 461.

Stock. Position of Correcting Glasses. Klin. M. f. Augenh., v. 52, p. 870.

Van Lint. Post-operative Astigmatism in Cataract Operation with Sliding Conjunctival Flap. Ann. d'Ocul., v. 151, p. 418.

Repeated Titles. **Fromaget** (3, p. 53) Ophthalmoscope, v. 12, p. 440. **Perez Bufill** (3, p. 132) Ibid., p. 440.

OCULAR MOVEMENTS.

Aubineau. Ophthalmic Zoster With Ophthalmoplegia. Gaz. Méd. de Nantes, v. 32, p. 181.

Butler, T. H. Miners' Nystagmus. Ophthalmoscope, v. 12, p. 449.

D'Espine. Double Ophthalmoplegia in Infant. Rev. Gén. d'Opht., v. 33, p. 307.

Dufour. Centering of Spectacle Lenses. Compt. rend. Soc. d. Biol., v. 76, p. 220.

Dupont, L. Movements of Eyeball by Excitation of Semicircular Canals in Cartilaginous Fishes. Ibid., p. 406.

Fleming, R. A. Recurrent Paralysis of Third Cranial Nerve. Rev. Neurol. and Psychiat., v. 12, p. 58.

Godechoux. Hysteric Nystagmus. Soc. Fr. d'Opht., v. 31. Ann. d'Ocul., v. 151, p. 471.

Laurence, L. Effectivity of Prisms. Op. J. and Rev. Optom., v. 33, p. 748.

Morrison, F. A. Treatment of Heterophoria and Heterotropia. Jour. Ind. St. Med. Assn., v. 7, p. 314.

O'Connor, R. P. Shortening Ocular Muscles Without Sutures Under Tension. (4 ill.) Arch. of Ophth., v. 43, p. 368.

Ohm, J. Graphic Registration of Miners' Nystagmus and Lid Movements. (8 ill.) Zeit. f. Augenh., v. 32, p. 4.

Schmidt, P. Nystagmus. Rostock Thesis.

Shufflebotham, F. Miners' Nystagmus. Lancet, July 4, p. 1.

Stumpf, P. Method of Studying Eye Movements. München Thesis.

Zubizarreta, J. M. Orthoptic Treatment of Strabismus. Arch. de Oft., v. 14, p. 323.

Repeated Titles. **Cheronet** (4, p. 85) Klin. M. f. Augenh., v. 52, p. 911.

CONJUNCTIVA.

Alexjewa. Pseudo-pterygium or Congenital Symblepharon. Klin. M. f. Augenh., v. 52, p. 894.

Angelucci. Influence of Seasons on Conjunctivitis. Arch. di Ott., v. 21, p. 451.

Armaignac. Hereditary Pterygium. Soc. Fr. d'Opht., v. 31. Ann. d'Ocul., v. 151, p. 469. Clin. Opht., v. 20, p. 429.

Blanchard, R. Conjunctivitis With Pigmentation. Bull. de l'Acad. de Méd., v. 78, No. 21.

Crockett, R. L. Staphylococcic Infection of Eye Treated by Immunotherapy. Arch. of Ophth., v. 43, p. 379.

Cunningham, J. F. Management of Trachoma. Lancet, July 4, p. 60.

Felonow, W. Trachoma Statistics From Ssosnowka. Viestnik Ophth., v. 31, p. 125. Klin. M. f. Augenh., v. 52, p. 926.

Fernandez, F. M. Purulent Ophthalmia Cured by Vaccine of Neisser. Crón. Med.-Quir., v. 40, p. 204.

Gebb, H. Relations of Inclusion Blennorrhea to Trachoma. Zeit. f. Augenh., v. 31, p. 475.

Hirschberg, J. Prognosis of Gonorrheal Ophthalmia. Cent. f. p. Augenh., v. 38, p. 161.

Kümmell, R. Atrophic Conjunctivitis With Formation of Symblepharon. (1 pl.) Arch. f. Augenh., v. 77, p. 200.

Kusnetzow, A. Excision of Cartilage in Trachomatous Ectropion. Viestnik Ophth., v. 31, p. 109. Klin. M. f. Augenh., v. 52, p. 917.

Layson, Z. C. Conjunctival Hemorrhages in Typhoid. Ophth. Rec., v. 23, p. 351.

Oblath, O. Irritative Action of Blood and Bile of Eel on Eye. Arch. di Ott., v. 21, p. 457.

Ohlemann. Vernal Conjunctivitis. Woch. f. Therap. u. Hyg. d. Auges., v. 17, p. 169.

Péchin. Ocular Complications of Blennorrhea. Rev. Gén. d'Opht., v. 33, p. 265.

Peterka, H. Treatment of Photophobia in Eczematous Conjunctivitis. Münch Med. Woch., v. 61, p. 1228.

Pokrowsky. Pemphigus of Conjunctiva. Klin. M. f. Augenh., v. 52, p. 897.

Sabunin. Cocain for Trachoma. Clin. Opht., v. 20, p. 446.

Snyder, W. H. Routine Bacteriologic Examination of Conjunctiva. Ophth. Rec., v. 23, p. 353.

Terson. New Operation for Pterygium. Soc. Fr. d'Opht., v. 31. Clin. Opht., v. 20, p. 472.

Trachoma in Mountain Sections of Virginia. Med. Rec., v. 86, p. 20.

Trapesonzewa. Chronic Filamentous Conjunctivitis. Klin. M. f. Augenh., v. 52, p. 897.

Williams, A. W. Relation of Trachoma Inclusions to Certain Bacteria. Proc. N. Y. Path. Soc., v. 14, p. 28.

Wischhusen, R. Treatment of Blennorrhea Neonatorum. Berlin Thesis. Klin. M. f. Augenh., v. 52, p. 901.

Wittich. Miliary Tubercle of Bulbar Conjunctiva. Klin. M. f. Augenh., v. 52, p. 868.

Repeated Titles. **Czaplewski** (3, p. 38) Ophthalmoscope, v. 12, p. 410. **Klebansky** (4, p. 86) Klin. M. f. Augenh., v. 52, p. 901. **Steil** (3, p. 149) Ophthalmoscope, v. 12, p. 410.

CORNEA AND SCLERA.

Aubaret. Clinical Results of Graft on Human Cornea. Soc. Fr. d'Opht., v. 31. Ann. d'Ocul., v. 151, p. 469.

Bailliart. Parenchymatous Keratitis and Trauma. Soc. Fr. d'Opht., v. 31. Ann. d'Ocul., v. 151, p. 452.

Begle, H. L. Microscopic and Chemic Analysis of Blood Staining of Cornea. (Bibl., 1 ill.) Arch. of Ophth., v. 43, p. 393.

Blok, D. J. Filamentous Keratitis. Nederl. Tijds. v. Geneesk., 1, No. 12. Arch. f. Augenh., v. 77, p. 77.

Cantonnet. Neuroparalytic Keratitis. Jour. d. Praticiens, v. 18, p. 47. Clin. Opht., v. 20, p. 454.

Denig, R. Grafts of Mucous Membrane and Epidermis in Disease of Cornea, and Injuries by Caustics. Zeit. f. Augenh., v. 31, p. 485.

Disson, E. Febrile Corneal Herpes. Heidelberg Thesis, 1914. Klin. M. f. Augenh., v. 52, p. 902.

Dutoit, A. Neuroparalytic Keratitis After Alcohol Injections in Superior Maxillary Nerve for Neuralgia. Zeit. f. Augenh., v. 32, p. 26.

Finkelstein. Syphilitic Keratitis in Rabbits. Klin. M. f. Augenh., v. 52, p. 896.

Foroni, C. Keratectomy. Liguria Med. Genova, 8, p. 49.

Fromaget. Inefficacy of Neosalvarsan in Hereditary Syphilitic Keratitis. Soc. Fr. d'Opht., v. 31. Clin. Opht., v. 20, p. 462.

Gjessing, H. Melanosis Sclerae, Pigment Deposits in Iris and Hyperpigmentation of Fundus. Norsk Mag. for Laegevid., v. 75, p. 793.

Grandclément. Prognosis of Diseases of Anterior Segment of Eyeball, Especially of Cornea. Soc. Fr. d'Opht., v. 31. Ann. d'Ocul., v. 151, p. 473.

Hillion. Action of Neosalvarsan in Interstitial Keratitis. Soc. Fr. d'Opht., v. 31. Clin. Opht., v. 20, p. 463.

Iwanow. Fuchs' Marginal Degeneration of Cornea. Klin. M. f. Augenh., v. 52, p. 896.

Kümmell, R. Treatment of Serpent Ulcer of Cornea. Münch. Med. Woch., v. 61, p. 1326.

Levin, M. Annular Scleritis. Münich Thesis.

Lewis, A. C. Etiology and Treatment of Corneal Ulcers. Jour. Tenn. St. Med. Assn., v. 7, p. 78.

Löwenstein, A. Actinomycosis of Cornea. (1 ill.) Klin. M. f. Augenh., v. 52, p. 859.

Stephenson, S. Bacillus of Bovine Tubercle as Factor in Phlyctenular Affections of Eye. Lancet, July 18, p. 153.

Suganuma, S., and **Hojo, M.** Superficial Punctate Keratitis of Leprosy. (2 pl., Bibl.) Arch. f. Augenh., v. 77, p. 221.

Von Poppen, A. Corneal Anaphylaxis. (5 ill., 2 pl.) Arch. f. Augenh., v. 77, p. 179.

Repeated Titles. **Astruc** (4, p. 53) Ophthalmoscope, v. 12, p. 445. **Kraupa** (4, p. 86) Ophth. Lit., v. 4, p. 96. **Wray** (4, p. 86) Ophth. Rev., v. 33, p. 223.

ANTERIOR CHAMBER AND PUPIL.

Chaillous. Electrolysis of Transparent Cyst of Anterior Chamber. Soc. Fr. d'Opht., v. 31. Ann. d'Ocul., v. 151, p. 461.

Firth. Pupil and Its Reflexes in Insanity. Jour. Ment. Sc., v. 60, No. 249.

Gradle, H. S. Subjective Examination of Pupillary Reflexes. (1 ill.) Arch. of Ophth., v. 43, p. 377.

Nonne, N., and Wohlwill, F. Isolated Reflex Pupil Rigidity With Absence of Paralysis. Neurol. Zbl., No. 10.

Santos Fernandez, J. Reflex as From Eye of Cat in Healthy Man. Cron. Med.-Quir., v. 40, p. 197.

Vladescu, R., and Babes, A. Physio-chemical Researches on Aqueous of Ox. Compt. rend. Soc. de Biol., v. 76, p. 320.

Zur Nedden. Inequality of Pupils From Monocular Central Corneal Scar. Klin. M. f. Augenh., v. 52, p. 844.

UVEAL TRACT.

Bachler, K. Metastatic Choroiditis. Berlin Thesis, 1914. Klin. M. f. Augenh., v. 52, p. 905.

Baumann, M. Etiology of Chronic Uveitis. Jena Thesis.

Bruder, J. Colloid Degeneration of Choroid. Arch. of Ophth., v. 43, p. 417.

Ewing, A. E. Sodium Chlorid Possible Cause of Some Diseases of Choroid and Retina. Amer. Jour. Ophth., v. 31, p. 193.

Gjessing, H. Melanosis Sclerae, Pigment Deposits in Iris, and Hyperpigmentation of Iris. Norsk Mag. for Laegevid., v. 75, p. 793.

Rousseau. Chronic Iritis. Soc. d'Opht. de Paris, June. Clin. Opht., v. 20, p. 461.

Stieren, E. Metastatic Choroiditis. Penn. Med. Jour., v. 17, p. 795.

Repeated Titles. **Wernicke** (4, p. 55) Klin. M. f. Augenh., v. 52, p. 910.

SYMPATHETIC DISEASES.

Elschnig, A. Sympathetic Ophthalmia. (Bibl.) Graefe's Arch. f. Ophth., v. 88, pp. 370, 392.

Gifford, H. Treatment of Sympathetic Ophthalmia With Atophan or Novatophan. Ophth. Rec., v. 23, p. 349.

Jess, A. Sympathetic Ophthalmia. (Bibl.) Samml. Zwang. Abhandl. a. d. Gebiete d. Augenh., v. 9, pt. 8.

Meller, J. Sympathetic Ophthalmia Without Characteristic Condition of First Eye. Graefe's Arch. f. Ophth., v. 88, p. 288.

GLAUCOMA.

Alexander, G. F. Malignant Glaucoma Successfully Treated by Repression of Lens. Ophth. Rev., v. 33, p. 210.

Alling, A. N. Newer Methods of Diagnosis and Treatment of Glaucoma. Conn. St. Med. Soc. Med. Rec., v. 85, p. 1196.

Behr, C. Anatomic Changes and Retrogression of Cup in Course of Glaucoma. Klin. M. f. Augenh., v. 52, p. 790.

Böhm, K. Congenital Anterior and Posterior Synechiae of Iris With Hydrophthalmos. (5 ill., Bibl.) Klin. M. f. Augenh., v. 52, p. 831.

Bonnefon, F., and Fromaget, H. Experimental Study of Sclerectomy. Soc. Fr. d'Opht., v. 31. Ann. d'Ocul., v. 151, p. 464.

Brown, E. V. L. Late Infection Following Trephining for Glaucoma. Jour. A. M. A., v. 63, p. 225.

Budek, R. Late Infection After Trephining. Klin. M. f. Augenh., v. 52, p. 924.

Calhoun, F. P. Hereditary Glaucoma (Simplex). (15 ill.) Jour. A. M. A., v. 63, p. 209.

D'Ayrenx and De Speville. Orbital Tumor and Chronic Glaucoma. Soc. Fr. d'Opht., v. 31. Ann. d'Ocul., v. 151, p. 458.

Domec, T. Glaucomatous Irido-choroiditis, Sclerecto-iridectomy. Clin. Opht., v. 20, p. 411. Ann. d'Ocul., v. 151, p. 459.

Fage. Prognosis and Treatment of Hydrophthalmos. Soc. Fr. d'Opht., v. 31. Ann. d'Ocul., v. 151, p. 460.

Fernandez, J. S. Difficulty of Diagnosing Glaucoma. Semana Med., v. 21.

Fromaget. Secondary Buphthalmos Treated by Trephining. J. de Méd. de Bordeaux, v. 44, p. 142.

Gradle, H. S. Corneo-scleral Trephine. Amer. Acad. Ophth. and Oto-Laryngol., 1913, p. 389.

Heerfordt, C. F. Glaucoma and Its Prophylaxis. Hospitalstidende, v. 57, May 20.

Hertel, E. Relation Between Eye Pressure and Constitution of Blood. Graefe's Arch. f. Ophth., v. 8, p. 197.

Jacqueau. Glaucoma Two Years After Cataract Operation; Cure by Sclerectomy. Clin. Opht., v. 20, p. 432.

Jäger, H. Sclerotomy With Iris Infiltration. Münich Thesis.

Lagrange. Relief of Ocular Tension. Soc. Fr. d'Opht., v. 31. Ann. d'Ocul., v. 151, p. 460.

Markham, H. C. Unusual Results of Trephine Operation for Glaucoma. Jour. Kans. Med. Soc., v. 14, p. 259.

Meinhardt, F. Elliot's Trephining Operation. Tübingen Thesis.

Morax, V., and Fourrière, A. Surgical Treatment of Chronic Glaucoma. Soc. Fr. d'Opht., v. 31. Clin. Opht., v. 20, p. 466.

Parisotti. Pathogenesis of Glaucoma. Soc. Fr. d'Opht., v. 31. Ann. d'Ocul., v. 151, p. 453.

Parker, W. R. Sclerocorneal Trephining for Glaucoma. (3 charts). Jour. A. M. A., v. 63, p. 215.

Plastinin. Glaucoma Outbreak After Instillation of Holocain. Klin. M. f. Augenh., v. 52, p. 869.

Posey, W. C. Value of Miotics in Chronic Glaucoma. (15 ill.) Jour. A. M. A., v. 63, p. 219.

Rochon-Duvigneaud. Results of Corneoscleral Trephining With Iridectomy. Clin. Opht., v. 20, p. 437. Ann. d'Ocul., v. 151, p. 435.

Sulzer, D. E. Results of Operative Treatment of Glaucoma From Its Beginning to the Present. Ann. d'Ocul., v. 151, p. 401.

Repeated Titles. **Meller** (4, p. 8) Ophth. Rec., v. 23, p. 342. **Rolandi** (4, p. 73) Ophth. Lit., v. 4, p. 94. **Tristaino** (3, p. 105) Ophth. Rev., v. 33, p. 211.

CRYSTALLINE LENS.

Andogsky, N. Dermatogenous Cataract. (Bibl.) Klin. M. f. Augenh., v. 52, p. 824. Acquired Progressive Cataract in the Young. Ophth. Rev., v. 33, p. 216.

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Liégard and Prieur, M. Estimation of Partial Permanent Disability From Ocular Accidents of Labor. Soc. Fr. d'Opht., v. 31. Ann. d'Ocul., v. 151, p. 471.

Todd, F. Research in Ophthalmology, Training of Ophthalmologists, Their Promotion and Encouragement Through Established Teaching Fellowships. Jour. A. M. A., v. 63, p. 3.

Weaver, J. S. Legal Aspects of Eye Work. Jour. Mo. St. Med. Assn., v.10, p. 466.

Abstracts From Foreign Journals

Dutoit, A. Neuroparalytic Keratitis Following Alcohol Injection Into the Superior Maxillary Nerve. (Zeitschrift für Augenheilkunde, v. 32, p. 26.)

The patient, a man of 40 years, had suffered from severe facial neuralgia in the region of the superior maxillary nerve, recently extending to the region of the ophthalmic nerve. Alcohol was injected into the superior maxillary nerve in the pterygo-maxillary fossa. Four days after the injection there was a superficial loss of corneal substance with delicate opacity of the parenchyma in the lower outer quadrant. The treatment consisted of subconjunctival injection of 1 per cent dionin solution every second day, and during the same period instillation of 3 per cent, and later of 5 per cent, dionin solution three times daily. The eye was also kept covered with a light, moist, aseptic bandage, changed several times daily.

Eight days after the injection of alcohol the ulcer had come to a standstill, and eleven days later the area over which there had been loss of substance was represented by a shallow depression, entirely covered by epithelium. Corneal sensation, which had been lost during the active stage of the ulcer, returned to normal, but the reflex closure of the lid was somewhat sluggish. Later, injection of the ophthalmic nerve for neuralgia in its area was followed by no other local disturbance than temporary edema of the upper lid.

Van Lint has reported a more severe case of neuroparalytic keratitis following injection of alcohol into the superior maxillary nerve, and accompanied by abducens paralysis.

Köllner. Epithelial New Growth in Limbus Recurring for Five Years, Removed by Mesothorium. (Archiv für Augenheilkunde, v. 77, p. 173.)

A woman of 53 applied at the Würzburg University Clinic with a growth at the temporal margin of the cornea looking like a pterygium, but with a thickened edge. This was removed in January, 1908. It recurred in six weeks, and was again excised and the part cauterized. Removal and cauterization were repeated in 1909, 1911 and 1912. In May, 1913, it encircled and encroached on the cornea. It was exposed to the radiations of 10 milligrams of mesothorium enclosed in a hard rubber capsule, for one to three minutes at a sitting, on eighteen successive days. Five months after this treatment the growth had entirely atrophied, the eye was free from inflammation, and the greater part of the area was normal. But there remained symblepharon, which had been present before the treatment was commenced. The eye itself was quite normal, the media clear and vision one-half, with hyperopic astigmatism. Microscopic examination of the excised growths showed them to have a relatively benign epithelial structure.

Sattler, C. H. Influence of Anesthetics on Subconjunctival Injections. (Graefe's Archiv für Ophthalmologie, v. 88, p. 259.)

Experiments were made on a large number of rabbits, especially with a view to determining how far preliminary anesthesia, or addition of an anesthetic to the solution, modified the effect of subconjunctival injections. It was found that preliminary cocainisation of the conjunctiva, or the addition of cocaine to the solution to be injected, strongly interfered with the effect of subconjunctival injections of common salt upon the albumen content of the aqueous humor; that is to say, upon hyperemia of the ciliary body.

This diminution of albumen secretion was especially marked upon puncture of the anterior chamber about twenty minutes after the in-

jection of the salt solution. When the puncture was done later (fifty minutes after injection), the effect of the cocaine had worn off, the injected salt solution had become diluted by diffusion, and the diminished secretion of albumen due to the anesthesia, as compared with the unanesthetised eye, was less significant.

The cause of this limitation of hyperemia in the ciliary body is not to be sought in the relatively slight vasoconstrictor action of cocaine, but in its anesthetic effect; the reflex excitation of the vasodilators, assumed by Wessely to explain the action of subconjunctival injections, being inhibited by interference with the conductivity of the sensory nerves.

Various other anesthetics have a simultaneous irritant action, which in itself produces varying degrees of increase of the albumen in the anterior chamber, the most marked instance of this being acoin. Addition of acoin to salt solution intended for subconjunctival injection does not notably influence its action. Acoin must, however, be employed cautiously in practice, since even weak solutions (0.2 gm. of 1 per cent solution) produce adhesions between the conjunctiva and sclera.

Experiments as to the relative power of various anesthetics to diminish the pain of subconjunctival injections indicated that cocaine and novocaine were the most agreeable to the patient. Novocaine is more suitable for this purpose than cocaine, since its effect in limiting the hyperemia of the ciliary body is less than that of cocaine.

Animal experimentation suggested that the attempt to limit the pain of subconjunctival injections by introducing them as far behind the globe as possible is not to be recommended, since the effect on the interior of the eye was entirely lacking, or if as often happened, the injected fluid forced its way forward to the region of the limbus, the pain was of the usual severity.

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